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(CIA-JOURNALISTS)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - THE CIA HAS HAD COVERT RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN JOURNALISTS THREE TIMES IN THE 2 1/2 YEARS SINCE THE AGENCY RULED AGAINST SUCH CONTACTS, REP. LES ASPIN, D-WIS., SAID TODAY.

"I HAVE LOOKED AT THE DETAILS OF THE THREE EXEMPTIONS AND AM SATISFIED THAT THE CIA HAS NOT STRIPPED THE RULE OF ITS MEANING OR VIOLATED IT WITH IMPUNITY," HE SAID. IN ALL THREE INSTANCES, HE ADDED, THE CONTEMPLATED INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS WAS NOT CARRIED OUT.

ASPIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, SAID HE INVESTIGATED THE CASES AFTER CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER MENTIONED IN AT A SENATE HEARING HE HAD GRANTED EXEMPTIONS TO HIS NOVEMBER 1977 RULING. THIS FORBADE THE USE OF MEDIA PERSONS AS COLLECTORS OF INTELLIGENCE OR THE USE OF U.S. MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS AS COVERS FOR INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, EXCEPTIONS COULD BE MADE WITH THE SPECIFIC APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTOR.

THE EXEMPTIONS, ASPIN SAID, "INVOLVED OCCASIONAL STRINGERS FOR AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS WHO WERE NOT THEN WORKING FOR AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS AND A NON-JOURNALIST EMPLOYE OF AN AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATION WHO WAS CONTACTED FOR REASONS THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS EMPLOYMENT."

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